

CORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

Interview with **ANITA BONDS**
Interviewed by Kwame Holman

Anita Bonds was Deputy Campaign Manager in Marion Barry's 1978 campaign. She has spent her entire adult life as a grassroots organizer, activist, and trusted political ally for campaigns and causes across the spectrum of the civil rights, social justice, worker's, LGBTS and women's equality movements. She served in various roles over the years in Barry's administrations, including being Director of the Office of Constituent Services. In 2012, Anita was elected as an at-large member of the DC City Council.

Date of Interview: May 2016

INTERVIEWER: As we were just talking about, a political figure of long standing in the District of Columbia. Let's go back to your early life before Marion Barry, even, before 1978, before that historic campaign of which you were such a major part. Who was Anita Bonds before then? How did she come to 1978?

ANITA BONDS: All right. Well, you know, let's see—1978. I'm not really quite sure what caused me to say yes, I would be a part of that campaign, but prior to that I had had a little experience working on other campaigns. I attended the University of California at Berkeley, and of course I was there during the early years of the Free Speech Movement, and so I came back home, one, thinking I couldn't go home. At least some of my friends out at school said, "You know, you can't go home now," and I'm like, "But my dad said I've got to come home." So, you know, I'm home.

And I think that sort of shaped me, and I began to see the community a little bit differently, from a different spectrum. It was not just you continued to grow up, and there are some basic things that you do, you know, you get a job, you have a family, and things like that. I began to think more about the plight of people and pay very close attention to anything that I heard in the news that would give me a clue as to how people were living, or not living.

So, I took on a project when I had my first kids. I took up this project of creating sort of like an opportunity for them to do art. We lived in Southwest, and so I took them over to the waterfront, and other kids came from the neighborhood. So, my husband said once, when he came home and all these kids were there, he says, "Do we have to do it here?" And I'm like, "But these are your children too." So that was my attitude about community, and I began to really build it from that whole activism period of my life. And that continued, as you can imagine.

Of course, because I was one of the few activists, having other people's kids on waterfront in my house, you know, doing projects and what have you, the neighborhood knew me as "if you wanted anything done, maybe you should ask her. She might be willing to do it." And so, I got

involved in the Channing Phillips campaign [for DC Delegate to Congress in 1971]. A couple of persons asked me, who were, I guess, politicos in the neighborhood. They asked me if I'd help, and I said, "What do I have to do?" "Well, could you just pass out the flyers?" Sure. Well, I know a lot of people here so I'll do that. They didn't tell me that my territory would be in another part of Southwest, okay, where no man went, if you know what I mean.

INTERVIEWER: Across the river.

ANITA BONDS: No.

INTERVIEWER: Greenleaf and—

ANITA BONDS: Down near Buzzard's Point.

INTERVIEWER: —and Buzzard's Point. Yes.

ANITA BONDS: Okay. I'm up at River Park so this was—okay, but I did it. I did it. And I must tell you, it was night and day to see the contrast. People living in, I guess, apartment-type but, you know, sort of row houses, same level, some without doorknobs. Individuals would come—you know, I'd knock and the door would creep open. It was clear that these were folk who were somewhat forgotten. They were not a part of the modern or the up-and-coming Southwest, and that really disturbed me. It really, really disturbed me.

So somehow, I then get involved in the civic associations there. I get involved with Southwest Assembly. Because I did the art, I tried my hand at making one of the posters one year, and my husband finds not kids so much as silkscreen all over the house, because you have to make the posters and then you put them up. So, I went through those experiences, and all of that led me to, I guess, gaining a reputation as an activist, and so much so that the politicians in the city then, including Harry Thomas, Sr., who I guess was very active, apparently, up in Ward 5, and he and a couple of others began to ask me to get more involved. "We need a good person to run from this part of town for school board." Okay, I'm a gopher. Okay, I'll do that, because I had young kids, so it made a lot of sense. So, I did that as well.

And you begin to gain a reputation. I met John Wilson [who was later elected a member of the first City Council in 1974]. I actually met John Wilson before I met Marion Barry. And I also worked for Jimmy Carter [when he ran for President in 1976]. I was the citywide canvass coordinator. That was an experience, because the Democratic Party apparently was older persons who, you know, had been around, and I guess who knew the ministers who were primarily running the politics in the District of Columbia in the '60s. If you remember Walter Fauntroy [a minister and first DC delegate], a couple of others, Reverend Smallwood Williams. You may remember that they were always at the center of Democratic politics in the city.

So those ladies—really, I'd just come home from school so you know how young I was, and at one of the meetings—not a knitting circle but, you know, they're all talking, and they said,

"Honey, how old are you?" And before I could open my mouth one said, "Are you 30?" I said, "Oh, yes, of course," so I won't be an outsider. So, they kind of taught me the ropes of building communication through conversation. I did a little studying on my own. When I was at Berkeley it was chemistry, so it's a scientific model. You know, you identify your issue and then you—okay.

So, I began to apply that in the political scene. Through that process I was pretty successful at being able to bring about victories for my candidate. I remember when I did one of the campaigns, I think the only place we won was in Ward 2, and that was mine. But did I think that all of this was going to happen, this success? No. I was just doing my job, and that's been my approach all along—just do my job. Do the best that I can. My father taught me, don't say you're going to do something and not do it. If you're going to do it, do it. So that was my attitude and that was the application that I made.

From the Carter campaign, I was introduced by Walter Fauntroy, Reverend Fauntroy. He was pretty much the center of politics in the district for that time, in the '60s, because he was ultimately, if you recall, elected delegate to Congress. He apparently told, or decided he was going to support Marion Barry for school board. So, I was assigned from his so-called camp to be a point for Marion Barry. So, I met him and I was like, okay, well, let me see. Okay. I seem capable. I go home and I tell my husband, "Well, he had these green coveralls on so, you know, he seemed to be good at identifying with people in the community. So, okay, I'll work with him."

All of this, now, is volunteerism, so just keep that in mind. So that's what I did, but I had the freedom to do it because I was not gainfully employed. I was raising my little babies. And my babies went with me to these campaign offices. They had their bottles there. In fact, my children are very familiar with the Wilson Building [DC's city hall], this building [where we are now], which was known as the District Building. They have slid down those granite bannisters many a time while we're having a political discussion somewhere. So, you know, just routine. They tell their children, "You know, go in that building. You'll see." So, we're very familiar with, I guess I'll say the artifacts of politics for the District of Columbia.

INTERVIEWER: Marion Barry, you met him, you saw him as capable, someone connected to the community, wearing green overalls. Pride Incorporated? [Pride was a training and employment program for youths Marion ran].

ANITA BONDS: Yes. Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What else was your impression?

ANITA BONDS: Well, and then I got to—well, I was assigned the task of being at his side and taking down every name of anyone who spoke to them and what their issue was. And then, at night, every evening at 11 o'clock, he would call and we would go over every name. So, he taught me to be extremely diligent.

INTERVIEWER: Constituent service. People who needed something.

ANITA BONDS: Anything whatsoever. And then I would take that list, when we were talking campaign time, and I could compile it because I would know a little bit about you, and then I could call you up and get you engaged further, and then I could sometimes estimate what your capacity would be for reaching out to others like you. As time went on, I was actually able to guesstimate the turnout, almost sometimes to within ten votes or something like that. But it was all because of the system of relating to people, taking time with people. You never meet a potential volunteer and just say, "Okay, I'll call you," and you call them 2 or 3 days before the election. No. You've got to stay in touch. Stay in touch. You make them a part of your family, and that does take time and energy, but that is a very concrete way of building a system.

Well, of course, Marion Barry, as mayor, he had a very strong field organization, and we came into government and made sure that that was maintained. That was my job. So, when he wanted to run for a second term and there was some question about whether or not he had accomplished enough, and the pollsters were saying, "Oh, I don't know," and he was wondering whether or not it was possible, I had my data. I said, "Well, I don't know, but this is what I know about this, that, and the other." And he said, "I'm going to take a chance on that," and the rest is history.

INTERVIEWER: Indeed. Let me take you back to the green overalls again, assigned by the Walter Fauntroy, your Pedroni operation, to work with this brand new person, to assess him for the school board run that would launch him on his way. What happened next? He got onto the school board through work that you did.

ANITA BONDS: Well, there were many. Marion Barry was the kind of personality that he never met an individual that he could not look you in the eye and talk with you, and that goes a long way. Of course, he was an educated man, someone with some ideas about how things should work. He brought that to the table and built a very strong relationship with the educators in the city. That propelled him to anything he wanted to do. So, when it's time to run for council at large, which he did, he had a reservoir of people who, "Oh, yeah, Marion Barry. I know him. He can deliver." So then, of course, when it was determined that we would have an elected mayor, he had some influence on that as well, and that was before he ran for council.

During the school board era, he had a considerable influence that he was building up and some ideas that he had. Of course, when [incumbent DC Mayor] Walter Washington decided he was not going to run for another term [although he later changed his mind], and it was pretty clear that [incumbent Council chairman] Sterling Tucker expected to inherit the position, Marion felt that that did not represent the downtrodden, the people who needed government the most. So, he said, "I'm going to go for it." And the real issue was to make sure that he could, so we actually challenged the law, because at that time [under the Home Rule charter] you could not be a sitting elected official and run for another position. So, we challenged the law—so that's history too. That's done. He did that, and he was able to run.

It was tough. It was real tough. I think the most difficult thing for me was, you know, we had our office in this old furrier—Miller's Furs—and we were in the basement, and no matter what they say, the fur was still in the air, so sneezing, itching, what have you, but we did it. Ivanhoe Donaldson was the campaign manager and his little cubicle was probably as wide as this table, and he had a chair. I sat on the other side of what was a little, skinny hallway, and if both of us moved our chairs we'd bang. That's how tiny it was. And one of our team members, Phil Ogilvie—I'll never forget—his office was in the vault itself. It was so nice and cool in there in the summer. Oh, my goodness. I mean, the vault. So that was us, and Jan Eichhorn. Phil and Jan are no longer with us; [they worked on issues]. But that's who we were. And Betty King, bless her heart, she got the choice location, because she was up on the top floor where the sun came in. The rest of us didn't have sun. We didn't have any sun.

But that was a magnificent campaign. Why? Because we dared to do a 93,000-piece mail with people power, not mechanical at all. We ordered the labels, boxes and boxes of labels, and Richard—my goodness, Richard and his friend, Richard [Lefante] and Richard—

INTERVIEWER: Maulsby?

ANITA BONDS: —yes, they got all their friends from the Gertrude Stein [gay/lesbian Democratic] organization to come in and pull labels. Susan Meehan [Ward 2 coordinator] even had her two children there, and they were really little. Allison was maybe 4 or 5, so labels all kinds of ways. I remember saying, "You've got to control this. This is getting out of hand," because you'd have to take off more labels. But that's how we did it in those days.

We knew that we probably had maybe a 50/30 chance, if the powers that be didn't interfere. We also knew that the only way we could stop Sterling [Tucker]—because all the city wanted to be a part of what was ventured, this economic development opportunity that was before us. We were going to be running our own government. [Mayor] Walter Washington had already set the standard, so to speak, being a former HUD official. So, we felt we had the hook-up and we could do more. Mr. Tucker had—anybody who was in business was already there with him. He looked the role, he smelled the role, the whole thing. Marion Barry, he was community.

And then some of Marion's close friends did a press conference and said, "Marion, you need to drop out." Okay. A preacher, the councilwoman from Ward 3, Polly Shackleton, David—okay, you know what I'm talking about [David Eaton, pastor of All Souls Unitarian Church]—and [Councilmember] John Wilson. They stood there and they said, "Marion, you've got to drop out. You can't do this."

INTERVIEWER: Because it was going to be a three-way split and the idea was that Walter Washington's time had passed.

ANITA BONDS: Yeah. So that was when we decided we must really dig in. We didn't know what would work, but from my perspective, I saw it as I have to call the troops together and I have to tell them, "This is our town and you're not doing this for Marion Barry. You're doing

this for your family, and you have a right to this." So that was like, "I don't care what you've got to do. Work until you bleed. This is about us, the people of the District of Columbia who have had nothing." And they did it. God knows they did it.

So, when I got the call—I'm trying to remember, when John [Gibson] called and said—he was our insider. You know, in those days the Board of Elections would let one person from each candidate be on the inside, because they did something where they collected the ballots at two o'clock and then they would count those. So, John's there. He can't call us. He can't tell us anything. At 1 minute, 2 minutes after eight, John calls. He says, "Honey, we's leading." Okay. And I said, "Okay." I'm busy calling all of my stations across the city. "Make sure we stay until that poll closes." It was about 10 minutes after he said that it registered, and then I turned and said, "Ivanhoe, John just called and said we're leading." Because we were just—that's all we knew to do. And we won.

INTERVIEWER: It's stunning. Back to the Shackleton and others, people who had been friends of Marion's thought he couldn't win in 1978, in this three-way race.

ANITA BONDS: Yeah. They felt that he was too much of an underdog. We didn't have a lot of money. What we did have is Marion's intelligence and intuitiveness, and he too was willing to work hard. We actually did three meet-and-greets an evening. Of course, he was late to each one, but we did three. But he was so good, and so convincing, and had a real grasp of figures and statistics, and what had transpired, and how we could do this differently, that particular in Ward 3 and in Georgetown, that community began to listen, because they'd not seen anything like this older-day Obama. Do you see what I'm saying? Someone who really talked to them from an educated perspective, but at the same time said, "You have a responsibility to try and preserve, to look after this community, and to make it what it can be, and we've got to work together." So that seemed to have been the issue.

We would go into homes. I mean, oh my goodness, a living room could possibly hold 30 or 40 people. It would be standing room only. I mean, it's crushing. We whisk him out to the next one, and he couldn't get away. There were so many questions. They just loved being near him. And when the vote came in, that's really what sealed it for us.

INTERVIEWER: He had that charisma. Many of the people who have talked, and many people who know the history talk about the coalition in 1978 that propelled him to that narrow victory in that three-way race. You mentioned Georgetown, white residents in Ward 3, multiracial residents in your community of Southwest, and poor people from across the city, poor black people from across the city, the gay community. Just as Richard Maulsby told us, it was just becoming a political force.

As you look back on it, how did you and Ivanhoe and Marion—how was that knit together? Was there a conscious effort to say, "Oh, if we select these progressive, if you will, entities, we can put together enough to win"?

ANITA BONDS: Well, I think initially the thought was we will try and reach out to communities that are open to the civil rights era. If you recall, with the Civil Rights Movement, it was the progressives that really came together, so that was the beginning of it. Georgetown happened because there were folks that just thought he was different, and they weren't very happy with the status quo. I believe that they were not so sure that the established business community was going to address their particular needs or that they would address the needs of the poorer communities in the district. And I think that's why, okay, well, this guy's got something else, and they could embrace him.

And the gay community, their whole thing was that "he embraces us." In those days, gays were not embraced. So, he embraced them. He would say, "They're just like anyone else," and I tell people, I was introduced to the gay community instantly, so I have no reservations whatsoever. And so, when folks say, "Well, how do you feel about that, and gay marriage?" it's like, it's just common sense to me. I believe that's how Marion really saw it, although when he voted, I understand, here at the council, I wasn't here then, but he made a statement on behalf of the ministers that stipulated that they didn't believe in that, and he had to go with his constituents, I think it was, not conscience but constituents.

INTERVIEWER: That campaign was put together. You did all the grassroots work. You involved all these many communities. You got the endorsement of the *Washington Post*. The night came and you got that secret phone call from John. How shocking, if you will, was it, that you had pulled it off?

ANITA BONDS: Well, of course we were happy and we felt like the message had prevailed, I think more than anything else, and that it was unveiling a new day for the District of Columbia, a day when everyone mattered and you didn't have to be rich, or be an affiliate, or be—what do they call it?—wired in order to get some attention. And I think that concept stayed with Barry throughout his years. I mean, people just adored him. He could be in any audience—flashy, or when he was around. Yes, they'd give a nice round of applause for the mayor, or for some out-of-town dignitary, but for Marion it was like [makes shouting sound].

He was the man, the greatest, because he touched so many lives through the programs, and just him. He had a habit of every couple of weeks just walking into an agency, unannounced, just go see the people. "No, keep doing what you're doing." "I'll go get—." "No, you don't have to go get the director. I know where the office is. So, what you doing there? How you doing?" That kind of stuff. So, he related to so many people.

INTERVIEWER: This is was a man, a politician, an educated man, as you said, whose attention to detail in terms of constituent service and working with voters, constituents, was such that you were making calls at eleven o'clock at night to make sure every question was answered. The same kind of attention to detail went into the campaign you and Ivanhoe Donaldson and Marion Barry put together. You won the election and then it was front-page news around the world, literally, that this former civil rights activist had won the job, against the odds, of mayor of the nation's capital. He would become this beloved figure you just talked about, but that

wasn't automatic. What happened in those first weeks, months, year, as he put together a government, a government some people call a government of superstars, and all that attention?

ANITA BONDS: Well, I would imagine that part of what was going on, that Ivanhoe—I.D., as I called him—was losing his mind, losing his mind because everyone that he ever knew, ever thought about, of any status that could be helpful, not only were they contacting him but he was contacting them, and he was trying to put together a team for the new mayor. I was relegated to not going into the government because I had another task to do. I had to stay on the Democratic Committee to make sure that his choice to fill his shoes as an at-large councilmember was, in fact, elected by this body. So, I think I was delayed almost 4 months. So that's why I say Ivanhoe probably was pulling his hair out and all this other stuff. So, I wasn't really there to fill the beat, you know.

I can recall, in one of his administrations, I think maybe the third administration, I believe, the woman who had been selected as, I guess, chief of staff called me at the campaign office to say, "I just can't figure out how you'll fit in," and I said, "Well, you know what? Don't you worry about it." I told him. I said, "And if she is that stupid—." He said, "Anita, you don't have to go there." I said, "I'm telling you. I'm not saying anything else, sir. You decide."

So that's when he made me his general assistant, so I could stretch the breadth of the government. But, I mean, it just didn't make any sense. Here I am your campaign manager. We got so much hate mail in that campaign. Oh, my God. More than 200 pieces of hate mail.

INTERVIEWER: Saying—

ANITA BONDS: —things about Marion Barry. He's this, he's that. He's unfit. He shouldn't be—he never knew about it. I kept it in the drawer.

INTERVIEWER: We imagine that President Obama had a similar, and has a similar experience.

ANITA BONDS: Oh yeah. Sure.

INTERVIEWER: So the first year is underway and it's successful in that all these people are getting appointed to these jobs. I remember Judith Rogers' appointment and people in the main parts of the power structure of the city were particularly impressed with her. And all around the mayor brought in people who represented constituencies across the country and across the community, and that kind of thing, and put together a credible government, and had a good run there early on.

What I wanted to get to, but feel free to talk more about other things, was you go from 1978, when there's this broad coalition of people really liking and loving this mayor, to, as time went on, to a situation which is one of the impetuses for this oral history, is the perception turned 180 degrees for many people who didn't know and haven't read and haven't heard things like

this oral history. How do you look at how that happened? I mean, there are obvious things of the arrest and what have you. But what did the mayor do for the city and how did his reputation become such that what many people give him credit for, like creating Prince George's County and this and that, is somehow lost today?

ANITA BONDS: Well, I don't know that the change was 180 degrees, but I do know wear and tear had its way with him. He, in my opinion, began to believe his own PR, perhaps that he was infallible, perhaps that—well, I am the mayor, am I not? That kind of approach. And he was under terrific strain and stress. As someone who probably contributed to it by way of scheduling him to death, I never saw it that way. But I made sure that he touched every constituency. You know, eight o'clock in the morning he was doing sticky buns and coffee up in the Mayor's Office, down on that end of this building, fifth floor, with different business groups. We did that as a regular, twice-a-month. At lunch time he had other groups that he was bringing in. At 1:30 to 2:30 in the afternoon, we were doing ice cream socials at a senior building. Every week we did this kind of thing. In the evenings, twice, maybe three times a week he had a community activity. He was in someone's home or at some church or something, talking to people. I thought it was—and remember, my energy level was, I mean, I was hyped. This is my job. This is what I need to do, and I was killing him, probably, indirectly. And he had a thirst for being in touch with everyone, so it was like feeding together, so to speak. But I'm sure he was tired from time to time.

And so, then it also exposed him to elements that perhaps were not willing to see him in the right light, that wanted to exploit his friendship, that wanted something, and how do you get somebody to listen to you? You give them something or you offer them something. And I think that happened a number of times. There were individuals in the community that I felt were always encouraging him to drink too much, because that's what I thought it was. I was not aware of the extent or any of that. In fact, during the trial I said, "Where in the heck was I?" and he said, "I hid it from you." And I said, "Well, I guess I should say thank you, but why?" He said, "You don't understand. It's the pressure. It's the pressure of this kind of job."

And I must tell you, there was an occasion where some members of the business community had me to a restaurant over in Georgetown—there were about six of them, and they were some world-class folk, and if I mentioned a name, you would know them—to tell me how they were trying to get him to pay attention to a deal that they wanted, and "we know you're the one that he'll listen to." And I'm like, "They have lost their minds." But they were very serious.

So, I figure that if he had to go through that, you know, just with his moving around in community, along with just meeting people generally, that's a lot of weight on him. So, I wasn't surprised once I understood what it meant, but initially, like you, I was mad as heck at him. You know, why would you do this to yourself? But, you know, it's a little more involved than that.

And now, today, on the political scene, what do they say? Not only is it a health epidemic but we've got to find a way to save the American people. Well, hello. Make him be a criminal. Interesting. As the world turns.

INTERVIEWER: He was an insatiable worker. I remember when I was driving the campaign car, and if he was not in the midst of doing some work, he needed to have a telephone in order to—and he would call people about things that were going on, "What's going on over there now?" He wanted to know what was happening in the department, how did the meeting go.

ANITA BONDS: Yep. I mean, he would have papers on the back seat, and thank goodness he was a speed reader. A lot of people didn't realize that. So, when you sent him a paper, maybe that thick, and you had a meeting the next day, you're going to explain to him, he would listen to you and then he would say, "Well, what'd you do about so-and-so?" People were like, how did he know? Well, he read it. You sent the paperwork and he read it.

INTERVIEWER: Unique politician. Finally, Anita, I know you have to go. Knowing people as you do, and knowing people around the city and knowing politics as you do, again, how is it that someone who had such gifts as a communicator, as a politician, as a policy-maker, the foresight and vision to bring African Americans into the government whose work for the government would help build the city and allow them to move out of the city and move to Prince George's County, establish it as the—this is what we hear—that it was a significant contributor to the growth and development of Prince George's County [Maryland] as the most affluent enclave of African Americans in the country, if not the world.

ANITA BONDS: That's true. That's very true.

INTERVIEWER: And yet there seems to be, again, this disconnected. Granted, you're not 180 degrees from what he was but a great disconnect, a lack of understanding or appreciation.

ANITA BONDS: I think it's a lack of appreciation and not acknowledging where they came from. You know, individuals make personal decisions about where they're going to live, where they're going to raise their kids, et cetera, and the American dream has taught us that if you don't have a sprawling acre or so, and a barbecue in the back yard, and a drive-in like, you know, for your carport and garage, then you haven't really made it. And that's the dream, that's the picture that many people have, and particularly in the '80s and the '90s, if you could get to the suburbs you would have truly made it. And a lot of people accepted that option, and why not?

Who would've ever thought that the District of Columbia would be coming back the way it is now. We talked earlier about where I live. My block, next door, \$939,000, my neighbor bought 2 years ago. The house on the corner, \$1.5 million.

So, it's such an explosion of possibility for having some sort of financial legacy that people never thought it would happen in the District of Columbia. You know, we were downtrodden. We were called "murder capital of the world" at one time, "chocolate city," and, you know, in America, chocolate mocha is okay but chocolate, I don't know about that. So those are the things that we were dealing with, and you would've never, ever thought that a little space of, what is it, 1,500 square feet would be cherished with dollar bills, and that has happened now.

So many who bothered to move to Prince George's County, and some to Montgomery County [Maryland], and even some to Northern Virginia, as they have aged they want to come back, and they are but it's pretty costly to get back now. But they are able to come back some.

INTERVIEWER: How responsible is that three-term mayor for the growth and development we see, and this explosion of property values, and this being a place where young people from around the country want to come and live?

ANITA BONDS: Well, you know, Marion, if he were here, he would say that the Reeves Center [the DC government office building he had built] fueled the 14th Street corridor, and it probably did. The District of Columbia, in the '60s, '70s was not a very exciting place. It was the typical Southern town. Along 7th Street the stores were, what, single-, one-, two-level, old.

I remember being in, I think it was Lansburgh [Building, a former department store before it was adapted as elegant housing] and the floor was different levels as you walked. In fact, there's a store in New York City like that called Macy's. It's so old, and you go to one level and you do the dip down. But that's what we really had. Now, Macy's in New York is, because of history. Lansburgh then was because that's the way it was, and that was what we had.

I think Marion, because he was supported by community that was prosperous, they saw an opportunity to do some things in the city that would bring about this so-called renaissance that we talk about continuously. But he really started it. He had a vision for it. He had a knack of bringing everyone to the table, and when I say everyone, the white business community was sporadically involved in D.C., but because they voted for him, he brought them to the table. But the carrot was, he said, "I'm bringing you to the table but you've got to have a minority partner."

And that was okay initially. Ha, ha, ha, we all loved that idea. This is wonderful. Come by, yeah. We're all going to work together. And then when we started talking dollars and cents, that one arrangement go awry, and then it's like a pause. But, you know, in the real world you can't pause because there's one problem. You have to keep moving forward. That's the law now. And, of course, one member from the white business community overturned our legislation so that we could no longer do it that. We still have the CBE program but it's entirely different. There's no longer an emphasis on minority businesses having to be a part of the major deals.

INTERVIEWER: Nonetheless, you have Mr. [Don] Peebles, who said at Marion's funeral that he wouldn't be there as a multi-multi-multimillionaire had it not been for what Marion Barry did to help him.

ANITA BONDS: He was a kid when we started in the first campaign. Definitely, he was, and yeah, he's done well, and he's right. Marion said, over in Anacostia, "Nope. Don's going to develop the building."

INTERVIEWER: And so many people—and I was going to say about these Prince George's County people, who I live among now—

ANITA BONDS: You're talking about Mitchellville?

INTERVIEWER: Mitchellville, MD.

ANITA BONDS: It is totally D.C.-spawned.

INTERVIEWER: And he is revered there. A nurse I was talking to at Kaiser Permanente said, "You know, you can't talk badly about two people to me—Michael Jackson and Marion Barry." And that is, finally, what we hear, the deep love, if you will, for this person over generations, and it's just passed on. As you say, the funeral [for Marion in November 2015] itself going hours.

ANITA BONDS: Yes, and the funeral itself, the one that we attended could have been more. It could have been more. There were a lot of community people there, but there were so many that had stories that they would like to tell. But, of course, we're in America. We're not on the continent of Africa, one of those countries where it just goes on, or in Asia, where the celebrations just go on for days.

INTERVIEWER: Anita, we know you have to go. Thank you very much. This has been very, very good.

ANITA BONDS: All right. Okay. It's a pleasure.

INTERVIEWER: Thanks.